



# Sonoma Water

**Clean. Reliable. Essential. Every Day.**

## Reservoir Operations Workgroup

Public Policy Facilitating Committee

January 21, 2026

Chris Delaney, Principal Engineer

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[sonomawater.org](https://sonomawater.org)



# Biological Opinion Adaptive Management of Reservoir Releases to Support Salmonid Migration

- **Lake Mendocino Pulse Release**

- Increase in minimum instream flows in **Upper Russian River** to support passage of salmonids
- Can occur only during **Dry** water supply conditions
- **Fall:** October – December
- **Winter/ Spring:** Feb 15 – June 1
- Can occur one time for up to **14 days**

Normal

**Dry**

Critical

- **Lake Sonoma Blockwater Release**

- Up to 2,500 ac-ft total release volume
- Can occur any time regardless of water supply condition





# RR Reservoir Operations Workgroup (RRROW)

❖ **Led by Sonoma Water**

❖ **Multiple Agencies:**

National Marine Fisheries Service

US Army Corps of Engineers

CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife

State Water Board

Regional Water Quality Control Board

RR Flood Control District

❖ **Provide guidance on the implementation of blockwater and pulse flow releases**

❖ **Sonoma Water provides weekly projections of Russian River Conditions**

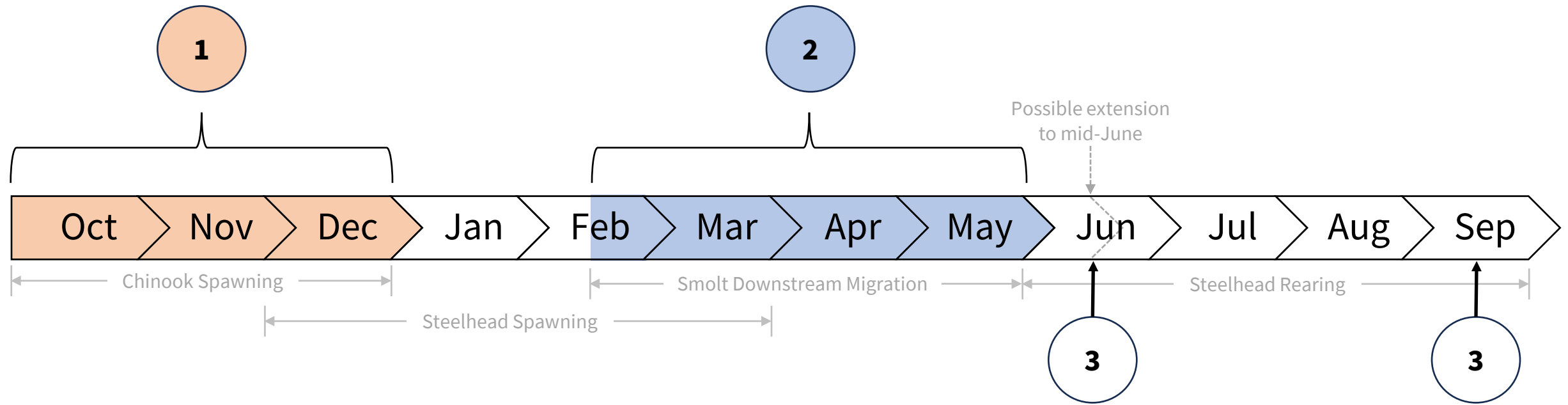
❖ **Co-develop Reservoir Operations Plan**

❖ **Conducted 2 meetings to date:**

- Sept 20, 2025: Kickoff Meeting
- Dec 15, 2025: Implementation Discussion



# Lake Mendocino Pulse Releases



- 1 Upstream Migration:** Oct – Dec management period
- 2 Downstream Migration:** Feb 15 – June 1 management period
- 3** Non-management period check-in meetings



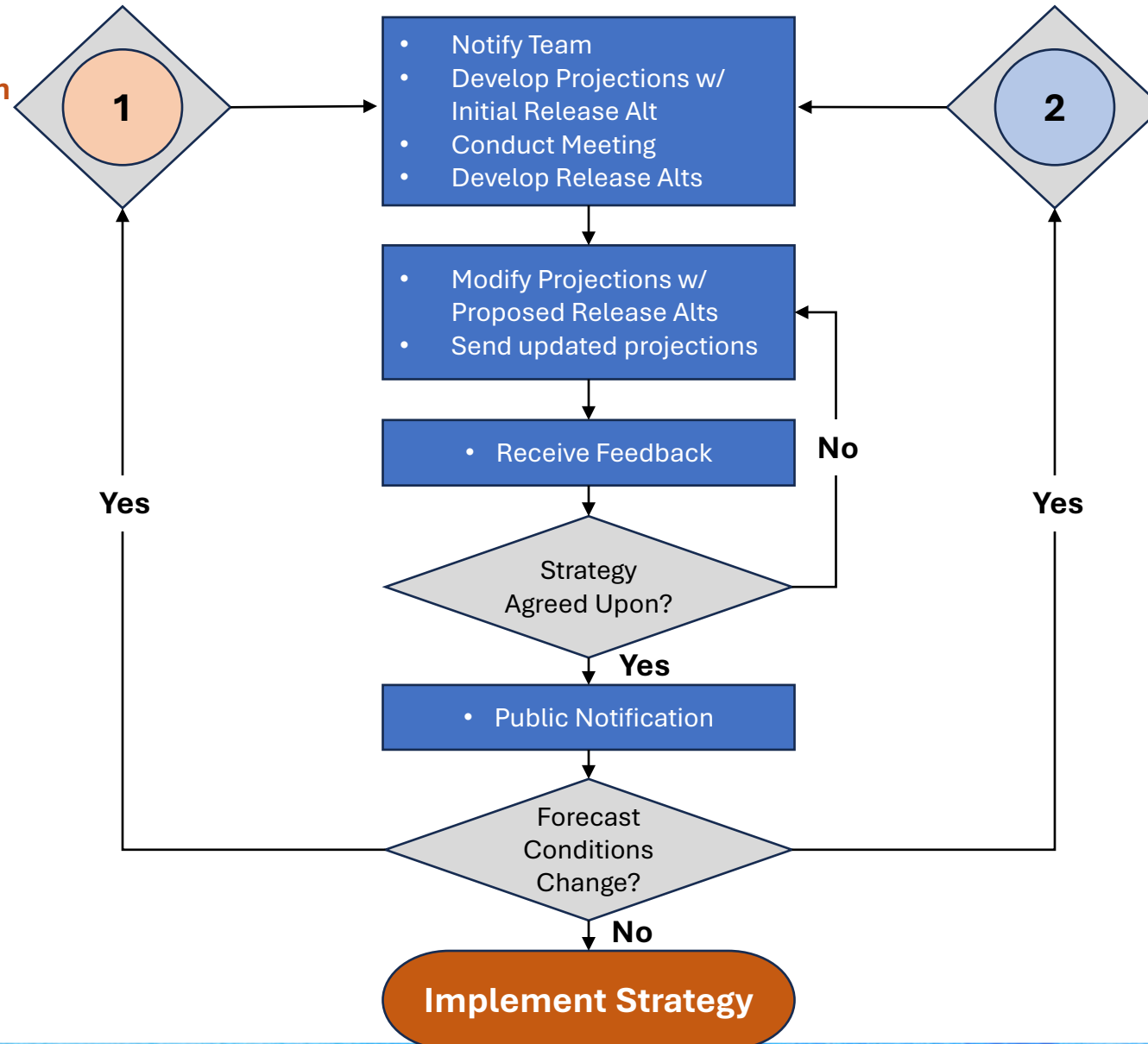
# Lake Mendocino Pulse Releases

**Upstream Migration: Oct - Dec**

**Downstream Migration: Feb 15 – May 1**

**Estuary Open**  
**Dry Water Supply Condition**  
**Spawners migrating**  
**Forecasted Low Flows**

**Dry Water Supply Condition**  
**Forecasted Low Flows**

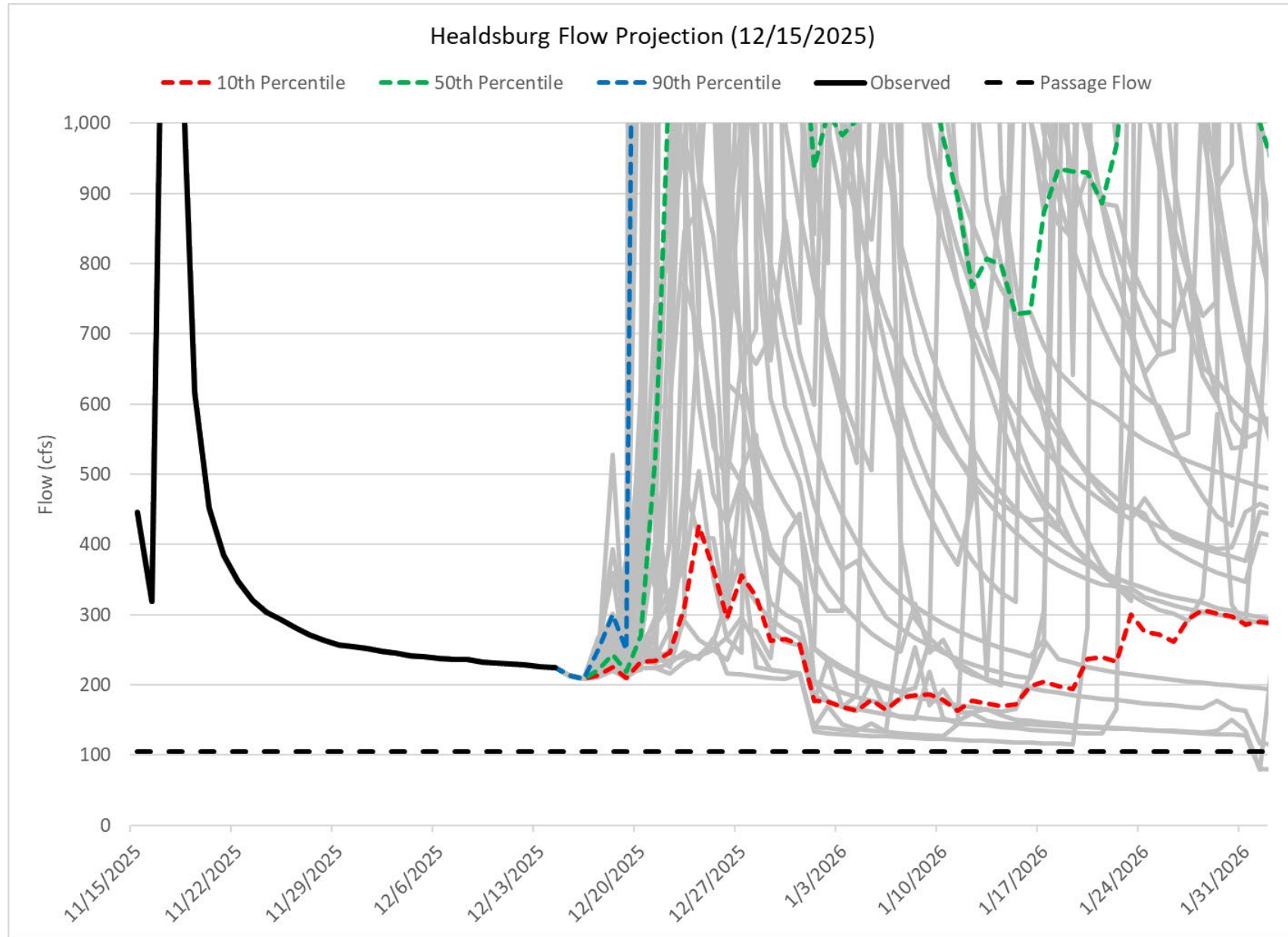


# Forecasting

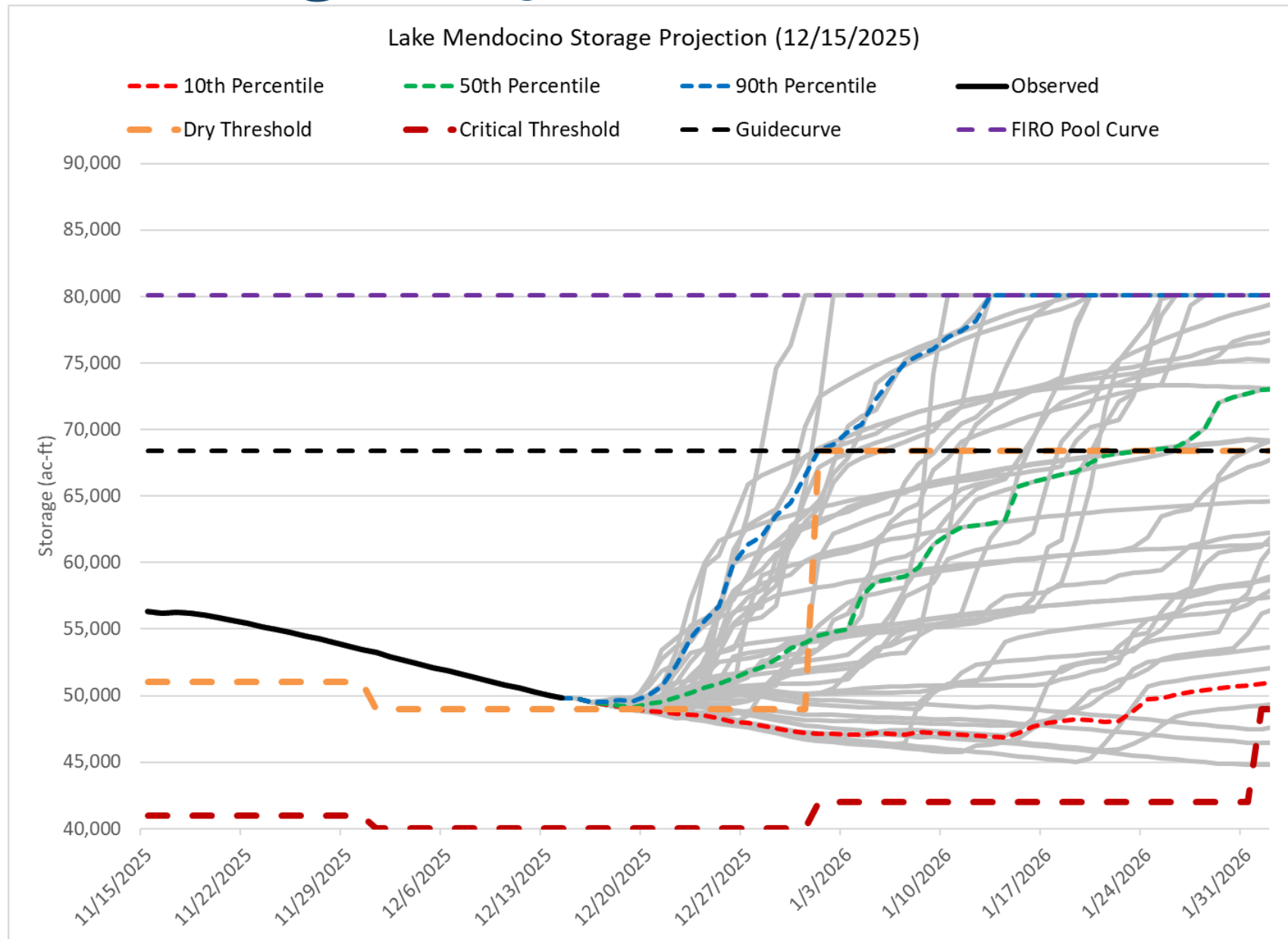
- **Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) Modeling Framework**
  - Ensemble forecasts from the California Nevada River Forecast Center
  - Forecasts developed and distributed once per week to workgroup
  - 30-day lead time
- **Locations:**
  - Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma
  - Russian River flows
- **Results will be posted every week to a Sonoma Water website**
  - If conditions warrant forecasts can be provided more frequently
  - Forecasts will be provided by email until website is developed



# Example Flow Forecast



# Example Storage Projection





# Next Steps

- Continued collaboration with Workgroup to refine program
- Continued issuance of weekly forecasts for decision support
- Develop Adaptive Management Plan

